School Counselors United in Professional Advocacy:

A Systems Model

Dawnette L. Cigrand
Winona State University

Stacey Gaenzle Havlik and Krista M. Malott
Villanova University

SaDohl Goldsmith Jones
Capella University

Abstract

Limited budgets may place educational positions in jeopardy and if school counseling positions become jeopardized, then school counselors must communicate their role and impact more effectively. However, school counselors may lack training and experience in professional self-advocacy practices, and advocacy efforts may be undermined by role confusion experienced by both counselors and the educational professionals surrounding them. This article describes one model of professional advocacy framed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory that may be used by school counseling leaders to plan systematic advocacy efforts that engage individual school counselors in united professional advocacy strategies.

Keywords: school counseling; advocacy; ecological model; systemic interventions

School Counselors United in Professional Advocacy:

A Systems Model

As budgetary deficits drive school-based decision-making, some school counselors are finding themselves with *pink slips* and without jobs, especially in California (Hurwitz & Howell, 2014). Considering that some school counselors' positions are in jeopardy, professional advocacy for the profession has become a pressing imperative. Despite the importance of professional advocacy in moving the profession forward, there has been limited emphasis on the topic in both training and scholarship directives (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Myers, Sweeney, & White, 2002).

Indeed, while literature abounds in relation to advocacy for students in school settings, only a few articles highlight strategies that could be used in school counselor advocacy for the profession itself (Myers et al., 2002). These articles are referenced in sections below, but it is important to note that most, if not all, of these articles are written with student advocacy as the primary focus of the article; that is, in current literature, professional advocacy has been written about only as a secondary consideration if it has been referenced at all.

It is not surprising, then, that school counselors may not have engaged in these specific advocacy strategies for the sake of the profession. Data collected by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA; Delegate Assembly, 2014) seem to confirm that school counselors struggle with professional advocacy beyond their immediate sphere of influence. Of the 836 school counselors who completed the survey conducted by ASCA, close to 75% (n = 659) of counselors surveyed had met with their principal to advocate 3 or more times per year, while an alarming number had never

met with their respective superintendent (61%; n = 534), their school board (71%; n = 614), a legislator (88%; n = 753), or their state board of education (87%; n = 743). These data, and other commentary on school counselor professional advocacy (Anderson, 2002; Bemak & Chung, 2008), clearly suggest that school counselors and school counseling leaders need to identify specific strategies for professional advocacy, outlined within a model through which they can accomplish large-scale change.

Anderson (2002) asserted the need for advocacy efforts that establish a clear and unified school counselor role, one that delineates specific priorities and actions born from the synergy of a systemic-ecological framework (Green & Keys, 2001; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). More specifically, Anderson (2002) contended that, through use of a systemic-ecological framework, school counselors could identify essential roles within the surrounding systems. A recent contribution proposing the use of this theory (McMahon, Mason, Daluga-Guenther, & Ruiz, 2014) seems to concur with Anderson on the applicable use of the systemic-ecological model for school counseling practice. As defined in Bronfenbrenner's systemic-ecological model (1977, 1994), multiple systems exist that impact the work of counselors, including the immediate school setting, the larger district and community, and broader systems such as professional associations, state boards or governmental bodies, and societal values and norms. Anderson (2002) urged school counselors to consider student and societal perspectives in developing their roles, and to advance understanding of their work through myriad professional advocacy actions.

Thus, the authors have proposed a systems-based model for a clearly delineated, comprehensive approach to professional advocacy, specifically guided by

Brofenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1977). In addition to providing concrete professional advocacy strategies for individual counselors, this multi-layered approach to promoting the role of the school counselor across the various systems (i.e., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) also encourages combined efforts to influence change. Therefore, the intention of this article is to offer a systemic model to unite school counselors, counseling leaders, and beneficiaries of the profession to promote professional advocacy efforts that comprehensively extend the influence of the school counseling profession to justly reach all students, and positively affect social change for schools, families, and communities. The school counselors' role will be defined, followed by a description of the proposed advocacy model, along with suggestions for the individual counselor as well as counseling leaders and associations who are strategizing large-scale change efforts.

The Role of Professional School Counselors

The role of a school counselor varies widely across contexts and differs even within specific school districts and schools (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011; House & Hayes, 2002). Such divergence has resulted in what Bridgeland and Bruce deemed "an unclear mission" (p. 4) for school counselors, giving the profession an appearance of one that is lacking in identity (Schimmel, 2008). The absence of a clearly communicated and unified role, and the perceptions of stakeholders in regards to this dilemma, is at the heart of why school counselors have largely been omitted from educational directives and reform (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). Because advocacy for the school counseling profession is impossible without a unified school counselor role, we offer a description of a school counselor's role that is based on national standards and a literature review.

An initial school counselor role, which focused solely on vocational preparation, expanded over time to include students' academic and social-emotional development (Stone & Dahir, 2006). Trained, full-time counselors began to provide clinical (counseling) and consultation services in regards to promoting students' personal development, with a new emphasis on developmental and responsive services (Gysbers, 1990). The 1970's saw a greater call for accountability, resulting in the recognition of the need for a comprehensive and systematic school counselor role that entailed goal setting and helping all students with their career, personal, social, and academic development (Dahir, 2001).

The ACSA National Model (2012) of school counseling programs has developed over time and in concert with those above changes, to offer a unified, comprehensive, and nationally standardized framework for determining a school counselors' role. The program model emphasizes four areas, including *foundation*, *delivery*, *management*, and *accountability* systems. Essential in this model is the idea that counselors develop a systematic plan that provides comprehensive services to enhance three areas for all students: academic, career, and social-emotional well-being. This plan deemphasized school counselor clerical and testing duties, to focus on counselor collaboration, advocacy, leadership, individual and small group counseling, classroom or large group guidance lesson delivery, and coordination of various school counselor interventions and services (Dahir, 2001; Sink, 2005).

The ASCA National Model (2012) suggests the importance of addressing the needs of *all* students and implies the importance of data collection, along with the disaggregation of that data according to specific groups, to identify groups for additional

support and services (Kaffenberger & Young, 2013). Further, it implies that school counselors must understand and meet the needs of a full range of students, including those with specific needs, such as English language learners, youth living in poverty or experiencing discrimination, special education students and gifted students (Bryan, Holcomb-McCoy, Moore-Thomas, & Day-Vines, 2009; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Wood, Portman, Cigrand & Colangelo, 2010).

A call for empirical evidence to support the school counselor role has inspired research with findings that lend direction and detail to the school counselors' role. For instance, use of comprehensive school counselor programs that addresses all three areas of student development (e.g., academic, career, and social-emotional) has been shown to have positive outcomes. Researchers have found that fully-implemented school counseling programs (in two states), when staffed by masters-level trained school counselors, showed positive outcomes that included: increased student attendance and test scores, greater numbers of students graduating high school and attending and graduating from college, and reduced rates of disciplinary actions (Carey & Harrington, 2010a; Carey & Harrington, 2010b). McIntosh (2009) highlighted the effect when programs are staffed with adequate counselor-to-student ratios.

School counselor roles in addressing students' social-emotional well-being are also supported with evidence linking youth social-emotional competencies with improved academic performance (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Durlak et al. (2011) generally described social-emotional skills as relationship and decision-making skills, self-understanding/self-awareness, conflict-management skills, and empathy for others. The

importance of ensuring positive youth development, particularly for youth of color, as it relates to self-understanding and personal awareness is. A study has linked strong ethnic or racial identities in youth of color (African American, Latino, and Asian-American youth) to improved academic outcomes, as strong identities have proven to act as buffers against societal racial and ethnic discrimination (Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001). Thus, promotion of youth personal and social development should be considered an integral part of the school counselor role, to be accomplished through group and individual counseling and delivery of standards-based curriculum in the classroom.

The school counselors' role is also defined with emerging literature that links youth environment to socio-emotional well-being, which in turn affects academic and career outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011). In other words, stressors and supports in students' environments can impact individual well-being, and their individual (socio-emotional) well-being ultimately affects their academic and career performance. Understanding the relationship between environmental stressors and school success lends support for the school counselors' role as a systems change advocate, in an effort to mitigate inequities and barriers (e.g., poverty, discrimination, English language learner) that impede student success (ASCA, 2006). Such findings also support the role of school counselor in fostering school connectedness, in order to provide a protective factor to contextual stressors (Lapan, Wells, Petersen, & McCann, 2014).

Importantly, the findings of Lapan et al. (2014) dovetail with other studies that demonstrate the positive impact of school counselor contact with students, particularly in relation to the provision of career and academic planning (e.g., the setting and

exploration of career and college options and goals). Specifically, such interaction fosters school connectedness for students, achieved by (a) career and educational planning, to help youth learn about their interests and vocational options, (b) matching their course selections with interests and career options, and (c) engaging them in personally relevant career and technical education learning experiences to make school meaningful to each of them. Such services have shown to increase the likelihood of students applying to college, in particular for students of color or those living in poverty (Bridgeland & Milano, 2012; Bryan et al., 2009; Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011; McDonough, 2005; Trusty & Niles, 2003). Conversely, researchers have attributed, in part, a recent reduction in the percentage of college attendance of boys across the nation to a lack of career and academic guidance, whereby girls in that study cited more often engaging in such planning with parents, friends, teachers, and school counselors (Gifford & Evans, 2012).

Of course, one-on-one student-counselor contact and relationship building requires time and, therefore, appropriate counselor-student ratios. Indeed, experts have estimated that increases in counselor numbers in school settings can augment college enrollment numbers, even beyond that of a reduction in class sizes in the elementary grades (Hurwitz & Howell, 2014; Pham & Keenan, 2011). Further, Carrell and Hoekstra (2010) found that schools with an additional counselor help in the form of counseling interns, as compared to those without interns, positively affected boys' reading and math scores and reduced disciplinary infractions.

Empirical findings make a case for adequate counselor numbers to support a comprehensive school counselor role, allowing for the development and implementation

of a program that connects students' personal, academic, and career development. Underpinning this role is standards-based reform, which requires data collection and analysis in shaping school counselor interventions for specific populations within such comprehensive programs (Stone & Dahir, 2006).

Finally, in spite of the empirical support for a comprehensive school counselor role, school counselors have noted ongoing challenges in promoting and sustaining such a role when stakeholders (e.g., administrations, community members, and government officials) hold unfitting expectations (Lewis-Jones, 2013; Moyer, 2011). Stakeholders may simply lack knowledge of the empirical evidence that demonstrates the academic impacts of a comprehensive school counselor role, or an understanding of school counselors' actual qualifications and training. Either explanation affirms the need for school counselors and beneficiaries to improve professional advocacy by engaging in leadership practices that promote role consistency and task congruency as a part of effective program delivery (Shillingford & Lambie, 2010).

While considering the meaning of advocacy in relation to school counselors' role, the authors developed a definition specifically tailored to the profession. School counselor professional advocacy will be used in this article to indicate school counselors' efforts to promote awareness and support for their professional role. This role is founded upon standards (e.g., national, state, and local school counselor standards), practices (e.g., evidenced-based practices), and specific needs of local student populations. Professional advocacy actions should occur across all systems that serve to potentially define, fund, or restrict the counselor's role. The following sections will

describe the ecological systems model and ways school counselors can engage in advocacy across each of those systems.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1994) proposed that human development is synergistic, occurring through interactions with the environment over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In his model, human development is impacted in a reciprocal manner through human engagement across four interrelated systems, named as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner proposed that active persons are able to create contextual and developmental change based on high levels of motivation and persistence (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). With motivation and persistence, then, school counselors can use the following framework of Bronfenbrenner's four interrelated systems to plan and implement specific advocacy actions to promote the school counseling profession. The four structures of the model, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and the macrosystem, are described, and school counselor actions are suggested within and across these systems.

Microsystem and Mesosystem

The microsystem is comprised of direct interactions within the immediate surroundings (Bronfrenbrenner, 19940). For school counselors, direct interactions include those with students, school employees (e.g., teachers and principals), parents, and essential community members (e.g., mental health professionals, school board members) with whom the school counselor regularly engages for work purposes. Hence,

as applied to school counseling, the microsystem may be conceptualized as the immediate school environment, community, and district in which each counselor works.

The mesosystem connotes a system of interactions across microsystems, to include the linkages, connections, or relations between microsystems (Bronfrenbrenner, 1994). Applied to school counselor advocacy, the mesosystem entails *how* a counselor interacts, communicates, or relates with parents, students, school district members and community stakeholders to promote their role. School counselors can strategically target advocacy efforts toward those in the microsystem who hold the greatest influence over their professional futures, including: (a) students and their families; (b) supervisors, such as the principal or other administrators; and (c) persons or groups who may impact school district policies that inform the counselor's role and allocation of school counselor funding (e.g., school board members, the superintendent, and a school counselor district coordinator). School counselors can promote their role to those key players by drawing on three factors: (a) external authorities, (b) data that identify context-specific student needs, and (c) research outcomes (e.g., evidence-based practices and outcome assessments). Following are descriptors of each factor.

Draw from external authorities. School counselors can justify their roles to stakeholders when they can effectively explain that their professional behaviors are premised on wider authoritative voices (Dodson, 2009). External authorities can include school, district, state, or national policies regarding the school counselor's role, as identified in various documents such as ASCA National Model (2012), or guidelines created by the state department of education or state legislative statutes. One's role can be established through meetings with one's principal, ideally revisited and solidified

each fall with a written document that states in detail the counselor's expected tasks. In such a meeting, the counselor can explain that role as informed by external authorities, including the counseling program's mission and goals, along with state and national standards.

Use data to assess contextual needs. Carefully and thoroughly collected data that reveal the unique needs of a particular school is a second factor that can be used as an advocacy tool for school counselors' roles. School counselors can gather data from several sources, including students, parents, and teachers, as well as through school reports of discipline, truancy, dropout, or assessment data that identify achievement gaps for underperforming students. Such data may justify program planning and delivery, and can be used to create a proactive and preventive comprehensive program (Carey & Dammitt, 2008).

A comprehensive plan supported with data may support a school counselor's justification for refusing to engage in duties that are inappropriate to one's professional role, such as subbing in classrooms or disciplining students. Further, outcome data from interventions should be reported, emphasizing when programs show positive outcomes, the nature of those outcomes (e.g., improved grades, behaviors, or attendance), and an assessment of whether or not the outcomes have justified the resources, such as monetary and human effort invested in them (Shlonsky & Gibbs, 2004). Individual counselors or teams of school counselors can report these data locally (e.g., school board meetings, local newspaper); while associations may collect and publish data from school counselors across the state to communicate the broad impact school counselors have as a group.

Apply evidence-based practices. A third method to consider for professional school counselor advocacy entails the application of evidenced-based practices. The school counselor's role and actions can potentially be more successful, and more aptly supported by stakeholders, when premised on research-based practices (Whiston & Sexton, 1998). For instance, if teacher, student, and parent feedback identifies school-wide bullying as an issue, a school counselor can effectively justify instituting a comprehensive and time-consuming anti-bullying program when able to demonstrate that the intervention is an internationally recognized, research-based program. In addition, counselors can make a strong case for accurate and comprehensive application of that program when they can speak authoritatively that, when only partially implemented, such programs may be less effective, wasting time and money (Dimmit, Carey, & Hatch, 2007). Positive outcomes of such programs can be reported through presentations and in writing to stakeholders, including administrators, parents, and school board members. It is also important to share "what works" with other school counselors through presentation at state or national conferences, or possibly by publishing research on the programs in the What Works Clearinghouse (Institute of Education Sciences, United States Department of Education).

Exosystem

The exosystem includes organizations that are not in school counselors' immediate settings, but which may directly or indirectly impact their roles (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). State government, neighborhood associations, counselor training programs, state boards of education, and affiliated organizations (e.g., American School Counselor Association) are some examples of these entities. Unlike

the microsystem, the exosystem influences the school counselor in a more indirect way, as the effects (e.g., policies and procedures) of organizational decisions 'trickle down' through others (e.g., university supervisors or school administrators) to ultimately impact the microsystem. Examples of formal structures in the exosystem that may impact school counselors include counselor preparation programs, accreditation bodies, and governmental entities. Following are suggestions for school counselor advocacy with these aforementioned organizations. School counselors can promote their roles in the exosystem by doing the following: (a) engage community groups, (b) participate in professional associations, (c) create connections with constituency groups, and (d) collaborate with university programs and accreditation bodies.

Engage community groups. School counselors can work with informally structured groups in the community, to advocate for the school counseling profession (Bryan & Griffin 2010; Kaffenberger, Murphy, & Bemak, 2006). Groups or organizations who influence the norms of a community, who may support or impede the work of the school counselor, should be considered, such as daycare providers, neighborhood alliances, community service organizations (e.g., Rotary Clubs), chambers of commerce, or religious organizations. School counselors can engage such groups by asking for assistance with school counseling initiatives (e.g., volunteers for job shadowing, career fairs, mentor programs) or for donations to fund projects. Through such collaborative ventures, these groups will likely gain better understanding of the work of school counselors, to subsequently promote a positive frame of reference to others. On a larger scale, school counselor association leaders can engage legislatively with specific

groups whose missions align with school counseling initiatives. Making such alliances may also prove to be mutually beneficial for all parties involved (Conyne & Cook, 2004).

Participate in professional associations. As part of an advocacy task in the exosystem, school counselors should regularly engage in professional development opportunities to keep abreast of, and to influence the direction of the field (Herr & Erford, 2011). Professional development can be achieved through membership in professional associations, such as the American School Counselor Association, and regular attendance at state or national conferences. Through such activities, leaders in school counselor associations can work together to create constructive change and lobby for legislative initiatives that positively impact the work of school counselors. The idea is to create "one vision, one voice" (ASCA, 2012, p. xii) in a region, so that initiatives can be promoted by a majority of its members.

Create connections with constituency groups. Entities such as state boards of education, governmental task forces, or individual legislators have an effect on the work of the school counselor, and are therefore in a position to help counselors advocate for the profession. The ASCA National Model (2012) presents clear steps for advocacy work in regards to collaboration with external entities. These include communication with major stakeholders such as other educators and policymakers to indicate which educational or school counseling practices may not be working well, as well as to expose them to effective practices that promote more equitable or successful outcomes for youth.

Ideally, a lobbyist would be employed within each state, who could best communicate the school counselor role to political stakeholders (indeed, school

counselors could advocate with local and state organizations to allocate money for a

school counselor professional lobbyist). However, school counselors can also create

relationships and act as consultants with governmental entities to directly communicate

to them ways that school counselors support state and federal educational goals. In this

work, they can advocate to be included in governmental education initiatives so that

language that supports school counseling funding and appropriate roles is considered. If

a school counselor is not sure of the best ways to communicate with legislators, the

American School Counselor Association (2003) provides a public relations and

advocacy manual, which provides recommendations for script for letters, presentation

overheads, as well as planning ideas for advocacy initiatives. School counselors can

also follow the American Counseling Association (ACA) Office of Public Policy and

Legislation recommendations (2011, pp. 2-7), which simply state:

1. Contact your representative and senators.
2. Be brief.
3. Focus on only one issue in each communication.
4. Ask for something specific.
5. Keep a copy of your email or letter for future reference.
6. Follow up.

Collaborate with university programs and accreditation bodies. It is

important for counselor preparation programs and practicing school counselors to work

together so that the preparation of school counselors is in sync with actual requirements

of counselors in educational settings (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). To impact school

counseling in this respect, counselors can advocate in the following ways. First, they

can act as consultants in the development of accreditation standards (e.g., CACREP,

2009) that guide curriculum in school counseling preparatory programs, making

practice-based recommendations to counselor preparatory programs through membership in university program advisory boards and through consistent, ongoing communication with regional counselor preparatory programs and their organizations (e.g., such as state associations of counselor educators and supervisors). School counselors can provide feedback to individuals and whole organizations regarding needs in the preparation of school counselors, particularly in the area of professional advocacy knowledge and skills. They can affect change in accepting and influencing school counseling interns in site supervision, and through guest speaking appearances in counselor education classes. Finally, school counselors can work with counselor educators to conduct research in the field that informs best practices in school counseling (Miller, 2006). With such evidence-based support of what effects the best student outcomes, school counselors can then use that information to advocate for funding for their positions, as well as to specifically advocate for certain roles they should be taking. All of these acts of advocacy allow for school counselors input into the preparation of future school counselors, and therefore, the future of the field.

Macrosystem

The macrosystem, the outermost later of the ecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) includes the overarching cultural patterns and subcultures that influence the broader systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In the macrosystem, individuals are directly and indirectly influenced by the norms of the culture, as well as overarching belief systems (Santrock, 2011). For school counselors, the macrosystem includes the norms and values of the school counseling profession as a whole, as well as societal perceptions of their roles. Since the role of the school counselor has evolved through

the years, beliefs about the roles and values of school counselors still vary across many settings (Martin, Carey, & DeCoster, 2009).

Examples of possible norms related to school counseling that could be promoted include: (a) the basic idea that seeking counseling support is acceptable, (b) information about how one's socio-emotional status impacts career and academic success and therefore should be addressed in school settings by school counselors, and (c) the expertise of the school counselor as uniquely and highly trained to attend to the socio-emotional, academic, and career needs of youth and their families in the school setting. Consequently, advocacy within the macrosystem concerns educating others regarding such norms or, conversely, to counter erroneous beliefs or norms regarding school counselors or counseling as a profession that have emerged in a specific context.

To influence norms and public perception, school counselors can take a lesson from the health profession (Hansen, Holmes & Lindemann, 2013), and educate the public through various media outlets locally, regionally, and nationally. Media outlets include radio ads, radio interviews, television commercials, billboards, ads in local and national magazines, regular columns in local and state newspapers, ads and informative articles (e.g., parenting strategies, study or college tips) in newsletters to parents and students. Following are suggestions for best communiqué of norms, including use of: (a) communication, (b) consistent language, and (c) data.

Communicate the school counselor role. In an effort to make the broad work of shaping cultural norms related to school counseling feasible, school counselors and related school counseling associations can collaborate to create strategic advocacy plans that seek to convey norms across various media outlets (Johnson, 2000). A public

media plan should be developed which includes strategies at each systemic level, to clarify and promote a clear description of the school counselors' role, as shaped by contextual needs and the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2012). As an example, school counselors could work with counseling peers in their districts to develop a plan for creating and disseminating articles, ads, and notices regarding the school counselor's role or impact. Venues for airing these include the local newspaper, links on a district web site, local educational or parenting magazines. Counselors could share responsibility for contacting and working with such media outlets, as well as co-authoring or producing such posts and publications.

Use consistent language. Any media messages regarding school counseling would ideally apply consistent language across districts, states, and the nation. Examples include consistent use of a single description of the school counselor role, and use of the title "professional school counselor" in lieu of "guidance counselor" (ASCA, 2006). Common language and ideologies in school counselor titles should especially be used in the school setting (microsystem), which can have a large impact on colleagues and clientele. School counselors can also distribute their information about their position to stakeholders, such as the one provided by ASCA (2006), which states the overall role of the school counselor.

Use data to support the profession. Included in any media commentary regarding school counselor promotion should be the use of data that demonstrate the positive academic, personal/social, and career outcomes of students' development based on school counselors' interventions and programs (Sink, 2009). This means gathering data for all initiatives delivered through the counseling department, so that a

clear picture of the positive impact of the school counselor can be provided. For

example, any media material promoting school counselors should provide factual data

on school counselor impact; specifics of a region or school setting where it is being

advertised is stronger, to pair perceptions of the school counselors' role with local youth

success (Dodson, 2009). At the macrosystem level, this includes demonstrating the

benefits of the role of the school counselor by providing regular reports of the

effectiveness of programs to the school board or state governing agencies. For broader

discussions of the school counseling profession, data may also be gathered about

school counseling practices by researchers. School counselors should consider

becoming involved as participants in school counselor research so that data from

across the nation can be collected on promising practices. Such opportunities are often

announced through the *ASCA Scene* (a networking site for professional school

counselors) or made available through school counseling listservs. Research

participation may translate into evidenced-based literature that demonstrates how

school counselors' positively impact students. All of this information can be used to

promote retention of counseling positions. Meetings that entail dissemination of such

influential data and research to stakeholders (e.g., administrators, parents, or state and

national organizations) should also be included in the macrosystem advocacy plan.

Discussion

In this article, a model for professional school counselor advocacy was proposed.

Bronfenbrenner's systems theory (1977, 1994) offers specific strategies for counselors

to advocate at multiple levels and in myriad ways, providing a guideline for a more

comprehensive approach toward advocacy planning. By engaging at each level in a

planned and consistent manner, school counselors can begin to promote themselves and their profession in a more effective way. As individual school counselors work with other school counselors, school counseling associations and beneficiaries of the profession on professional advocacy efforts, large-scale change can occur.

Although school counselors presently carry many responsibilities, including large caseloads (Harsy, 2012), the annual development of a detailed advocacy plan, accompanied with regular review, is a necessity for ensuring that such plans are enacted (Johnson, 2000). A professional advocacy plan (see Appendix A) can be integrated into counselors' regular program planning each year, created with, or approval by, immediate supervisors (such as school principals). With increasing caseloads and additional responsibilities, finding time to integrate new initiatives, such as those recommended in this article, may seem overwhelming. Recognizing the impossibility of engaging in every single advocacy tactic in this article, the authors recommend for school counselors to begin with a few self-advocacy goals to initially develop and engage in advocacy efforts that seem most achievable and effective.

For example, a counselor beginning the process of creating a professional advocacy plan may start on the microsystem with the inclusion of a few small adjustments, such as ensuring the counseling webpage clearly promotes their roles and is aligned with national standards and by scheduling a time to meet with lead teachers and administrators early in the fall to discuss initiatives planned by the counseling department. The counselor may also plan to include exosystem initiatives into the school year, such as meeting with school counselors through regional and statewide organizations/meetings, to ensure they are aligned with the practices recommended by

the ASCA National Model (2012). The counselor may also take time to regularly read school-oriented journal articles to keep abreast of current practices.

In considering the macrosystem level, the school counselor may engage colleagues in setting forth an advocacy plan that allows for disseminating media messages regarding the role and impact of school counselors. Individual counselors can be content experts or guest columnists for newspapers, radio and television shows on timely topics. Through collaborating with a state organization, a budget can be set aside for creation of national ads, for both billboards and television commercials, sharing factual information on the profession of school counseling.

Kaffenberger et al. (2006) suggested use of leadership teams to engage in advocacy efforts, whereby counselors collaborate with school counseling peers, district counseling supervisors, counselor educators, as well as other administrators at state and national levels to affect positive school counselor roles and leadership. Leaders of a state association can develop a plan that would support state educational initiatives, legislation, and the profession, then elicit members to implement the plan in a large-scale approach. It would be important for these leaders to partner with stakeholders, legislators, lobbyists and others that can further the goals of the association. A state-level plan has been created and included as an example (see Appendix B). Advocacy efforts for leadership teams can vary according to context-specific needs identified within the group itself, and would ideally be regularly assessed for outcomes and goal development and attainment.

Finally, a note is provided for school counselors who are concerned about taking time away from their students to engage in professional advocacy. We suggest that they

consider the analogy of an airplane emergency. In such an emergency, adults are instructed to put oxygen masks on themselves first, before helping their children or others around them. If the first and sole focus is on helping others, adults must ensure their own safety so as not to risk loss of consciousness, so they are ultimately able to aid others. Similarly, school counselors must ensure that their positions are safe, and that their role is appropriate, effective, and aligned with school counselors nation-wide; otherwise, school counselors may simply be relegated to unhelpful tasks, to ultimately be rendered irrelevant or easily replaced, or to face elimination from public school settings altogether (House & Hayes, 2002).

Advocacy and Counselor Education

School counselors would ideally begin learning and applying the skills of professional advocacy in their training programs. First and foremost, school counseling students can learn where to find and critically read emerging literature that supports the school counselors' role: a task worthy of any course but particularly well suited for a research course. Students also need to see examples of others' efforts in advocacy, and counselor educators can embed examples across courses such as school counselor orientation, practicum and internship. Examples include presenting the actual advocacy work in which counselor educators are engaged; presenting cases that demonstrate real and fictitious advocacy efforts, and; presenting cases that require students to develop best practices in advocacy.

Students can be asked to develop advocacy skills related to writing and public speaking in persuasive manners, with assignments that require them to practice such skills. They can be required to identify, interpret and communicate in a persuasive way,

using emerging research that supports the impact of school counseling roles. Counselor educators can require various advocacy-related assignments, asking students to engage in webinars, in-service training, and student advocacy training offered through state and national organizations, practice in developing and presenting to their peers a comprehensive advocacy plan, or identifying and disseminating data that support the school counselors' role and position (see Appendix C).

Future Research

Continued efforts in research must be made, to further legitimize the profession in the minds of clientele, colleagues (e.g., administrators, teachers), and constituents who make decisions regarding funding. Using the ecological framework as a guideline for counselor action, research could determine what advocacy practices school counselors can most effectively engage in and whether or not those practices are influencing change in their settings. To remain consistent with Bronfenbrenner's theory, researchers should consider personal characteristics (e.g., school counselor sex, age) and what he describes as contextual variables (race, ethnicity, school culture, school location, such as urban or rural), to determine how professional advocacy efforts are influenced by individual school counselor differences (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). Ideally, studies would determine which type of advocacy, and which combined actions and efforts at each level, garners the greatest support for the school counselors' role and positive change in the social, educational, and vocational outcomes of youth.

Summary

With the advent of educational budget cuts across the nation (Hurwitz & Howell, 2014), use of a concrete and detailed advocacy plan that reaches across levels is imperative in maintaining the viability of the school counseling profession. Further, as talks of educational reform continue across the nation, the school counselors' voice must be united and included as an essential piece of that narrative (House & Hayes, 2002), offering input regarding the role and impact of the school counselor. Any role confusion or conflict can only serve to inhibit and weaken the position of the school counselor overall, subsequently reducing the benefits to be gained from school counseling programs (Paisley & McMahon, 2001).

Hence, there is an urgent need for developing 'one vision, one voice,' through advocacy work. To achieve this unified voice, advocacy plans must reflect local and current contextual needs, evidenced-based outcomes, and be created in collaboration with colleagues and stakeholders at district, regional, state, and national levels. Such efforts may seem overwhelming to individual counselors, particularly those who are new to the profession. However, it should be noted that, later in life, Bronfenbrenner critiqued his earlier systems' theory as overemphasizing the influence of context and discounting the powerful role one individual can play to effect change within various contexts (Tudge et al., 2009). Indeed, with consistent efforts over periods of time, individual counselors can work collaboratively and intentionally to be a part of a system of change that can truly make a difference.

References

American Counseling Association. (2011). *Effective advocacy with members of congress.* Alexandria, VA: Author.

American School Counselor Association. (2003). *Public relations and advocacy: promoting the role of the school counselor.* Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved from: http://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/Advocacy-Resource-Center.pdf

American School Counselor Association. (2012). *The ASCA National Model: A framework for school counseling programs* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Author.

American School Counselor Association. (2006). *The role of the professional school counselor.* Retrieved from http://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/RoleStatement.pdf

Anderson, K. (2002). A response to common themes in school counseling. *Professional School Counseling, 5*(5), 315-321. Retrieved from PsycINFO.

Bemak, F., & Chung, R. C.-Y. (2008). New professional roles and advocacy strategies for school counselors: A multicultural/social justice perspective to move beyond the nice counselor Syndrome. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*(3), 372-382. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2008.tb00522.x

Bridgeland, J. M., & Bruce, M. (2011). *2011 national survey of school counselors: Counseling at a crossroads.* New York, NY: The College Board. Retrieved from http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/counseling_at_a_crossroads.pdf

Bridgeland, J. M., & Milano, J. A. (2012). Opportunity road: the promise and challenge of America's forgotten youth. Retrieved from http://knowledgecenter.comple tionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/306%20Bridgeland%20Milano%202012.pdf

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist, 32,* 513-531. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.32.7.513

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. Reprinted in M. Gauvain, & M. Cole (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. 3* (2nd ed., pp. 37-43). Oxford: Elsevier.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology, Vol. 1: Theoretical models of human development* (5th ed., pp. 993-1023). New York: Wiley.

Bryan, J. A., & Griffin, D. (2010). A multidimensional study of school-family-community partnership involvement: School, school counselor, and training factors. *Professional School Counseling*, *14*(1), 75-86.

Bryan, J., Holcomb-McCoy, C., Moore-Thomas, C., & Day-Vines, N. (2009). Who sees the school counselor for college information? A national study. *Professional School Counseling*, *4*, 290-291. doi:10.5330/PSC.n.2010-12.280

Bryan, J., Moore-Thomas, C., Day-Vines, N., & Holcomb-McCoy, C. (2011). School counselors as social capital: The effects of high school college counseling on college application. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 89*, 190-199. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2011.tb00077.x

Carrell, S. E., & Hoekstra, M. (2010). *Are school counselors a cost-effective education input?* Unpublished manuscript, Department of Economics, University of California, Davis. Retrieved from http://www.econ.ucdavis.edu/faculty/scarrell/counselors_input.pdf

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (2009). *The 2009 CACREP Standards.* Retrieved from http://www.cacrep.org/doc/2009%20Standards%20with%20cover.pdf

Carey, J. C. & Dammitt, C. (2008). A model for evidence-based elementary school counseling: Using school data, research, and evaluation to enhance practice. *The Elementary School Journal, 108*(5), 422-430. doi:10.1086/589471.

Carey, J. C., & Harrington, K. M. (2010a). *Nebraska school counseling evaluation report.* Amherst, MA: Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation.

Carey, J. C., & Harrington, K. M. (2010b). *Utah school counseling evaluation report.* Amherst, MA: Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation.

Conyne, R., & Cook, E. (Eds.). (2004). *Ecological counseling: An innovative approach to conceptualizing person-environment interaction.* Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Dahir, C. A. (2001). The national standards for school counseling programs: Development and implementation. *Professional School Counseling, 4*(5), 320-327. Retrieved from EBSCOHOST.

Dimmit, C., Carey, J., & Hatch, T. (2007). *Evidence-based school counseling.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Dodson, T. (2009). Advocacy and impact: A comparison of administrators' perceptions of the high school counselor role. *Professional School Counseling, 12*(6), 480-487. doi:0.5330/PSC.n.2010-12.480

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, *82*(1), 405-32. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x

Gifford, B., & Evans, K. (2012). *Gender disparities in educational expectations: A look at 9th graders*. Center for Child and Family Policy. Retrieved from http://dukespace. lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10161/7552/Gender%20Achievement%20 Expectations_11-5-12.pdf?sequence=1

Green, A., & Keys, S. (2001). Expanding the developmental school counseling paradigm: Meeting the needs of the 21st century student. *Professional School Counseling*, *5*(2), 84-95.

Gysbers, N. C. (1990). *Comprehensive guidance programs that work.* Ann Arbor, MI: ERIC Counseling and Personnel Services Clearinghouse.

Hansen, H., Holmes, S., & Lindemann, D. (2013). Ethnography of health for social change: Impact on public perception and policy. *Social Science & Medicine*, *99,* 116-118. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x

Harsy, L. (2012). Effective strategies for school counselors who manage large caseloads. *Journal of Counseling in Illinois*, *1*(3). Retrieved from http://www.ilschoolcounselor.org/conference/handouts/lee%20harsy%203.pdf

Herr, E. L., & Erford, B. T. (2011). Historical roots and future issues. In B. T. Erford

(Eds.), *Transforming the school counseling profession (3rd ed.), (pp. 19-43).*

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Holcomb-McCoy, C. (2007). *School counseling to close the achievement gap: A social

justice framework.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

House, R., & Hayes, R. L. (2002). School counselors: Becoming key players in school

reform, *Professional School Counseling, 5*(4), 249-256.

Hurwitz, M., & Howell, J. (2014). Estimating causal impacts of school counselors with

regression discontinuity designs. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *92*, 316-

327. doi:10.10002/j.1556-6.2014.00159.x

Johnson, L. (2000). Promoting professional identity in an era of educational reform.

Professional School Counseling, *4*, 31-40.

Kaffenberger, C. J., & Young, A. (2013). *Making data work* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC:

American Counseling Association.

Kaffenberger, C. J., Murphy, S., & Bemak, F. (2006). School counseling leadership

team: A statewide collaborative model to transform school counseling.

Professional School Counseling, 9(4), 288-294. Retrieved from

http://schoolcounselor.metapress.com/content/VU127857664H207L

Lapan, R. T., Wells, R. Petersen, J. and McCann, L. A. (2014). Stand tall to protect

students: School counselors strengthening school connectedness. *Journal of

Counseling & Development, 92*(3), 304-315.

Lewis-Jones, P. L. (2013). A comparative study of professional school

    counselor/principal perceptions of the role of the counselor in elementary

    schools. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A*, *73*, 8-A(E).

Martin, I, Carey, J., & DeCoster, K. (2009). A national study of the current status of state

    school counseling models. *Professional School Counseling, 12*(5), 378-386.

    doi:10.5330/PSC.n.2010-12.378

McDonough, P. M. (2005). Counseling matters: Knowledge, assistance, and

    organizational commitment in college preparation. In W. G. Tierney, Z. B. Corwin,

    & J. E. Colyar (Eds.), *Preparing for college: Nine elements of effective outreach*

    (pp. 69-87). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

McIntosh, G. S. (2009). *The Relationship between the student/counselor ratio and*

    schools' success in meeting adequate yearly progress (Doctoral dissertation,

    University of Phoenix). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses

    database. (UMI No. 3400503)

McMahon, G. H., Mason. E. C. M., Daluga-Guenther, N. & Ruiz A. (2014). An ecological

    model of professional school counseling, *Journal of Counseling and*

    Development, 92(4), 459-471. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.2014.00172.x

Miller, G. D. (2006). How collaboration and research can affect school counseling

    practices: The Minnesota story. *Professional School Counseling, 9*(3), 238-244.

    Retrieved from: http://schoolcounselor.metapress.com/content/Y4PG8233

    34256781

Moyer, M. (2011). Effects of non-guidance activities, supervision, and student-to-counselor ratios on school counselor burnout. *Journal of School Counseling*, *9*(5), 1-31. Retrieved from: http://jsc.montana.edu/articles/v9n5.pdf

Myers, J. E., Sweeney, T.J., White, V. E. (2002). Advocacy for counseling and counselors: A professional imperative. *Journal of Counseling and Development,* *20,* 394-402. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2002.tb00205.x

Paisley, P. O., & Hayes, R. (2003). School counseling in the academic domain: Transformations in preparation and practice. *Professional School Counseling*, *6*, 198-204. Retrieved from PsycINFO.

Paisley, P. O., & McMahon, H. G. (2001). School counseling for the twenty-first century: Challenges and opportunities. *Professional School Counseling, 5*, 106-115.

Pham, C., & Keenan, T. (2011). Counseling and college matriculation: Does the availability of counseling affect college-going decisions among highly qualified first-generation college-bound high school graduates. *Journal of Applied Economics and Business Research*, *1*, 12-24. Retrieved from http://www.aebr journal.org/uploads/6/6/2/2/6622240/3_cp_tk_college.pdf

Phinney, J. S, Romero, I., Nava, M., & Huang D. (2001). The role of language, parents, and peers in ethnic identity among adolescents in immigrant families. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence; 30*, 135-153.

Santrock, J. W. (2011*). Life-span development* (13th Ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Schimmel, C. (2008). *School counseling: A brief historical overview.* (Doctoral dissertation summary, West Virginia Department of Education). Retrieved from: http://wvde.state.wv.us/counselors/history.html

Shillingford, M., & Lambie, G. W. (2010). Contribution of professional school counselors'

    values and leadership practices to their programmatic service delivery.

    Professional School Counseling, *13*(4), 208-217. doi:10.5330/PSC.n.2010-

    13.208

Shlonsky, A., & Gibbs, L. (2004). Will the real evidenced-based practice please stand

    up? Teaching the process of evidence-based practice to the helping professions.

    Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention, *4*(2), 137-153. doi:10.1093/brief-

    treatment/mhh011

Sink, C. A. (2005). *Contemporary school counseling: Theory, research, and practice.*

    Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Sink, C. A. (2009). School counselors as accountability leaders: Another call for action.

    Professional School Counseling, *13*(2), 68-74. doi:10.5330/PSC.n.2010-13.68

Stone, D. B., & Dahir, C. A. (2006). *The transformed school counselor*. Boston, MA:

    Houghton Mifflin.

Trusty, J., & Niles, S. G. (2003). High-school math courses and completion of the

    bachelor's degree. *Professional School Counseling*, *7*, 99-107.

Tudge, J. R., Mokrova, I., Hatfield, B. E., & Karnik, R. B. (2009). Uses and misuses of

    Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development. *Journal of Family*

    Theory & Review, *1*, 198-210. doi:10.1111/j.1756-2589.2009.00026.x

Whiston, S. C., & Sexton, T. L. (1998). A review of school counseling outcome

    research: Implications for practice. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *76*,

    412-426. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.1998.tb02700.x

Wood, S. W., Portman, T., Cigrand, D., and Colangelo, N. (2010). School counselors'

    perceptions and practices with gifted students and acceleration. *Gifted Child*

    Quarterly, 54(3), 168-178.

Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., Wang, M. C., & Walberg, H. J., Eds. (2004). *Building*

    academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research

    say? New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Appendix A

Sample Advocacy Plan for High School X

School Name:	High School X		School Year:	2014-2015
Counselor Name(s):	Professional School Counselor Jane Doe			
Partners in Advocacy:	Social Worker, Administrator, School Counselors, Secretary, State School Counseling Organization, Media Outlets, Local University			

System	Activities	Partners	Timeline	Notes
1. Microsystem That is, the settings in which the PSC works directly.	1. Meet with administrators three times per year regarding the school counseling program. Review school counseling program plan, roles, goals, and expectations. At the end of the year, highlight data showing effectiveness of interventions.	1. Administrators (principal and assistant principals)	1. Meetings: Sept 15th, Dec. 15th, May 30th	1. Meet with department heads of each academic program once per year.

System	Activities	Partners	Timeline	Notes
2. Mesosystem That is, the linkages of communication made between microsystem.	2. Set-up annual meeting with school counselors in the district (include all level). Define roles, set goals for promotion of data across programs, discuss needs of students in the district, and program plan.	2. School counselors in the district at all levels	2. Meeting: Sept. 30th, May 1st	2. Present goals to school board once annually.
3. Macrosystem Cultural patterns and subcultures that influence the broader systems. The values and norms of the profession.	3. Review all materials (including promotional brochures, newsletters, websites, etc.) used within the school counseling program to ensure they are aligned with the ASCA standards and include appropriate terminology of "school counselor" across systems.	3a. Partners in the school: Administration, teachers, secretaries 3b. Partners in the community: Media outlets, community organizations	3. End of school year	3. Materials will be used to promote the school counseling program and profession at all systems. Distribute flyers at the school, community, and family level.

System	Activities	Partners	Timeline	Notes
4. Exosystem Organizations not in the counselor's immediate surroundings. These include the state government, neighborhood associations, counselor training programs.	4a. Apply to present an educational session at the annual spring state level school counseling conference. Present data showing effectiveness of a counseling intervention. Volunteer at the conference. 4b. Set-up a meeting with the local university. Discuss training needs of current and past interns. Inquire if they would provide supervision training.	4a. State level organization officials 4b. Director and faculty of local school counseling university training program	4a. Check deadline for presentation proposal 4b. Meet with university in December.	4. Invite university partners to continue to send interns.

Advocacy plan review dates	Dates	Review Notes
1st Quarter	Sept. 30th	Administrators would like counselors to present the data on the effectiveness of the new curriculum to the school board during Spring 2015. Follow up on this.
2nd Quarter	Nov. 30th	Prepare for university meeting next month. Began volunteering on a committee for the state organization.
3rd Quarter	Jan. 30th	University requested that we supervise an intern in the spring. Got approval from the administration. Presented material at state conference.

Advocacy plan review dates	Dates	Review Notes
4th Quarter	April 30th	Reviewed all materials. Website has been updated to include the ASCA standards, a clearer definition of our roles as school counselors. Office sign now states "Professional School Counselor" and not "Guidance."

Note: Plan dates in each quarter where the plan will be reviewed to track progress.

Appendix B

Sample Advocacy Plan for State X School Counselor Association

Note: The following example illustrates how a state level association could create a plan of action that would involve various state committees for the sake of professional advocacy. The example integrates four state level association committees (Professional Development, Government Relations, Partnerships and Stakeholders, and Research and Evaluation), and their goals for each committee, into an action plan that may benefit school counselors through participation in current state and national initiatives. The list of goals below, followed by the committee action plan, uses College and Career Readiness as an example of a current professional advocacy initiative.

State X's Mission Statement

To promote excellence in school counseling practice to develop all students' academic, career and personal/social futures.

State X's School Counselor Association Goals
(Decided on at Leadership Development Institute in summer before school year)

Professional Development (PD) Committee Goal - To provide advanced training for school counselors in career development.

Government Relations (GR) Committee Goal - To have direct influence on career readiness initiatives through participation in development of policy and procedures at the state and local levels.

Partnerships with Stakeholders (PS) Committee Goal - To engage key stakeholders in partnerships to exchange ideas and information that may mutually benefit the career development of K-12 students.

Research and Evaluation (RE) Committee Goal - To collect statewide data on school counselor practices focused on college readiness.

State X	School Year: 2014-2015
State Association Leaders	*Jane Doe, John Smith, Donald Super, Frank Parsons, Linda Gottfredson*
Partners in Advocacy:	List governmental officials, liaisons through the Department of Education, parent groups, lobbyists, non-profit organizations, colleges/universities, and businesses that support the career development of students.

System	Activities	Partners	Timeline	Notes
1. Microsystem Set goals that would directly impact school counselors and students in K-12 schools.	1a. PD - Offer webinars through the state association website on model programs that develop career readiness specific to each level.	1a. Local University for video production; state school counselors	1a. Publish on assn. site by Dec.	1a. Jane Doe to call school counselors to participate with University.
	1b. RE - At the beginning of the year, ask high school counselors to track data (e.g., college-bound seniors, PSEO courses, Upward Bound and TRIO participants), and the programs and interventions they currently use in practice.*	1b. Technology committee; regional leaders; college liaison for PSEO; Upward Bound and TRIO state coordinators.	1b. All year	1b. Parsons - Create and offer form for tracking if counselor does not have a system currently in place to track this data.

System	Activities	Partners	Timeline	Notes
2. Mesosystem Interactions across microsystems that effect how the counselor interacts, communicates, or relates to parents, schools, school district members, and the community.	2a. PS - Create and distribute brochures that school counselors can use to work with community partners on career engagement. 2b. GR - Email school counselors, encouraging them to identify at least one school counselor in each district to actively engage administration and the school board in district-level career development discussions. Share name of counselor with state association to communicate key information consistently and quickly.	2a. Engage PSEO Graphics class to create. 2b. Identify board member(s) who will support school counselors with goal.	By October	2a. Make sure to put in state budget. 2b. Call school districts who did not respond by October.

System	Activities	Partners	Timeline	Notes
3. Exosystem Organizations not in the counselor's immediate surroundings. These include the state government, neighborhood associations, counselor training programs.	3a. GR - Assign each member of the GR committee to a leadership task (e.g., 1 member = Department of Education Career Readiness Task Force, 2 members and lobbyist = work with legislators to initiate legislation on increasing the number of middle school counselors in the state to develop strong 4-years plans of study, 1 member = present at administrative conferences on working with the counselor on career programming). 3b. PS - Invite representatives from various stakeholder organizations to round table discussions to establish career readiness goals and plans for the state.	3a. Legislators, Dept. of Education, State administration conference planners 3b. Parent groups; diversity associations; for-profit & nonprofit entities, media	3. On-going	3. GR Committee

System	Activities	Partners	Timeline	Notes
4. Macrosystem Cultural patterns and subcultures that influence the broader systems. The values and norms of the profession.	4a. RE - *Share the data tracked by high school counselors with media and state Department of Education. 4b. PD - Focus the theme of the state conference on Career Readiness. Give school counselors the option to earn a Career Development Specialist certificate by attending 3 or more sessions on Career Development. Invite outside businesses and organizations to be presenters so that we understand each other's professions.	4a. State school counselors, media, state department, round table participants 4b. State leaders, businesses, organizations, media	Spring	4a. Develop and distribute a handout for stakeholders explaining goal and data.

Advocacy plan review dates:	Dates	Review Notes
Fall Meeting		
Winter Meeting		
Spring Meeting		
LDI - Summer Meeting		

Note: Assign dates in each quarter where the plan will be reviewed to track progress.

Appendix C

Advocacy Presentation: Are School Counselors Worth It?

Across the nation, some school counselor positions are being eliminated or replaced with other professionals. You will be asked to answer this compelling question, Are school counselors worth it? You must provide evidence and a persuasive and professional voice [one source to start with: The Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation (CSCORE). http://www.umass.edu/schoolcounseling/]

Hand in written summary: summarize and critique at least 10 research studies, split between your 2-copresenters/peers that provides evidence of how school counselors impact students, school settings, academic learning, and/or career/college achievement. The written report must present a detailed assessment of the research, including the quality of the study.

The class presentation: With 2 other peers, present a case for school counseling. Simulate a presentation to a school board who has proposed cutting all school counselors and replacing them with social workers. Your presentation must include following:

Use a concise, compelling, and professionally written visual (usually in form of very brief power point slides).

 a. Begin with a succinct statement of the school counselor's degree/education, training and role.

 b. Next, succinctly, persuasively, and professionally present your case as to if you were actually speaking to a school board, as to why school counselors are best prepared for the job. Draw support for this from the literature.

 c. Imagine your simulated school district is highly diverse, with many immigrants, those living in poverty, and Whites and students of color. Indicate how the research shows that school counselors make a difference with 'underserved' populations who may face barriers to school and career success.

 d. Include a succinct statement of the evidence for the impact of school counselors. Which kind of school counseling task makes the greatest, most positive impact on students' academic and career successes, and what impacts are those?

 e. Closing statement: Give a persuasive 20-second closing statement summarizing your point. Who do you think the best person is for the job, and why?

Biographical Statements

Dawnette L. Cigrand is currently an assistant professor and coordinator of the school counseling program at Winona State University. Dr. Cigrand received her MA in school counseling from the University of Iowa, served as a school counselor in rural Iowa schools for 10 years, then returned to complete her PhD in counselor education. Dr. Cigrand's research interests include school counselor development, professional advocacy and leadership, and elementary school counseling interventions, especially for students with disabilities.

Dr. Stacey Havlik is an assistant professor in the Department of Education and Counseling at Villanova University. She received her PhD in counselor education from the University of Maryland. Her teaching interests include preparing school counselors to be leaders and advocates in education, supervising counselors in their internships and training counselors in the ethical and legal issues of the profession. Her primary research interests include investigating school counselor preparation and the issues faced by children and youth experiencing homelessness in schools. More specifically, she is currently engaged in qualitative research investigating school counselors' perceptions of students experiencing homelessness.

Krista M. Malott is an associate professor in the Department of Education and Counseling at Villanova University, Villanova, Pennsylvania. She currently trains master-level school counseling students, with a specialization in teaching and research regarding social justice advocacy.

SaDohl Goldsmith Jones is currently an assistant professor at Capella University, as well as a therapist in the greater Atlanta area. She completed her MA in school

counseling at Clark Atlanta University and her PhD in counselor education at the University of Iowa. Her research focuses on gifted education, especially twice exceptional learners.